

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Telephone Number Portability)	CC Docket No. 95-116

COMMENTS OF NENA

The National Emergency Number Association (“NENA”) hereby comments on the Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“Further Notice”) in the captioned proceeding.¹ Our suggestions focus narrowly on the question at ¶42 of the Further Notice: “how to facilitate wireless-to-wireline porting where there is a mismatch between the rate center associated with the wireless number and the rate center in which the wireline carrier seeks to serve the customer.” Because the 9-1-1 problems we discuss below also arise in wireline-to-wireline porting, they deserve serious consideration.

In the past, we have avoided commenting on the policy merits or the competitive implications of local number portability, and our intent remains the same. We wish to identify technical problems and potential solutions in connection with porting that crosses wire telephone rate center boundaries. The rate center is a regulatory artifact that determines the pricing of calls. Our concern is not with pricing but with other changes that may be caused by a port across a rate center boundary.

The delivery of a 9-1-1 call to the correct PSAP depends on finding the correct tandem switch, known as a “selective router,” whose purpose is to connect the call to the answering point

assigned to the area from which the call originates. Some routers can handle calls having no more than four distinct area codes. The same 4-code limitation may be associated with Centralized Automatic Message Accounting ("CAMA") trunks that still are used to link routers and PSAPs.

Because CAMA trunk capacity permits only eight digits to identify the calling number, the area code is represented by one of the digits and the remaining seven are the distinctive calling number associated with the telephone. However, many of the top 100 metropolitan areas of the country today include more than four area codes. If porting to a wireline provider crosses the borders of an existing selective router (which may serve only a portion of a metro area), it is likely that the ported number's area code will be different than the one or more assigned to the new geographic area.

In this circumstance, all PSAPs in the area with 9-1-1 CAMA trunks would need to replace them. If the new selective router also has a 4-code limit, it would need to be replaced. Upgrade from CAMA trunks to Enhanced MF ("EMF") signaling -- so as to handle more than four area codes -- may not be expensive, in itself. However, if the PSAP's CPE can't support EMF, it too would require upgrading. The big cost is replacing or changing the router, and the network duplication cost is also significant.² Small or large, the costs are likely to fall on the local 9-1-1 authority, a non-trivial consideration for many municipal and state governments.

¹ FCC 03-284, released November 10, 2003. Time to comment and reply was extended to January 20th and February 4th, respectively, by Order, DA 03-4059, released December 22, 2003.

² In reply comments, NENA will attempt to provide some dollar figures.

In addition, the local exchange carrier ("LEC") serving the ported number may also need to provide additional trunking to the selective router covering the new area, in order to assure correct default routing of 9-1-1 calls -- essential if there is any data/equipment failure during delivery of the call that would prevent its delivery to the appropriate PSAP. This additional cost could be borne by the LEC or the local 9-1-1 government entity, dependent on state laws/regulations for various 9-1-1 costs. If these changes cannot be made owing to financial constraints, the ported wireline customer's 9-1-1 call may go to the wrong PSAP, or the call may not go through at all.

Porting to a wireline service provider within the borders of a selective router currently serving the rate center associated with the NPA-NXX will not have the negative impacts discussed above. However, routing borders usually do not track LATA boundaries or other regulatory borders beyond rate centers. Thus it is difficult to predict the consequences of a particular port across a rate center boundary, except through case-by-case analysis.

NENA cannot ignore the additional costs its PSAP members may incur -- directly through equipment or router-PSAP trunk upgrades, or indirectly through router additions or modifications -- by reason of wireless-to-wireline or wireline-to-wireline porting having the consequences outlined above. The costs alone are not necessarily a reason to restrict porting, but their recovery should be addressed as a matter of sound policy.

Respectfully submitted,

NENA

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